

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

FENCE

(Ft.)

CODE 382

DEFINITION

A constructed barrier to animals or people.

PURPOSE

This practice facilitates the accomplishment of conservation objectives by providing a means to control movement of animals and people, including vehicles.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice may be applied on any area where management of animal or human movement is needed. Fences are not needed where natural barriers will serve the purpose.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Fencing materials, type and design of fence installed shall be of a high quality and durability. The type and design of fence installed will meet the management objectives and site challenges. Based on need, fences may be permanent, portable, or temporary.

Fences shall be positioned to facilitate management requirements. The fence design and installation should have the life expectancy appropriate for management objectives and shall follow all federal, state and local laws and regulations.

Height, size, spacing and type of materials used will provide the desired control, and management of animals and people of concern. Gates installed or constructed must equal or exceed the fence construction materials and workmanship with regard to livestock control and durability.

CONSIDERATIONS

The fence design and location should consider:

- Kind and behavior of livestock and/or wildlife.
- Location and adequacy of watering facilities.
- Topographic features.
- Soil-site characteristics.
- Location of livestock management, handling, and feeding facilities.
- Needs for improving grazing management and the development of potential grazing systems.
- Safety and human access.
- Aesthetics.
- Erosion
- Wildlife class and movement.
- Durability of materials.
- Flooding and stream crossings.

Where applicable, cleared rights-of-way may be established that would facilitate fence construction and maintenance. Avoid clearing of vegetation during the nesting season for migratory birds.

Fences across gullies, canyons or streams may require special braces or designs.

Fence design and location should consider ease of access for construction, repair and maintenance. Refer to applicable standards (ex:391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 393 Filter Strip) for specific guidance on fence location.

Fence construction requiring the removal of existing unusable fence should provide for the proper disposal of scrap materials to prevent harm to animals, people and equipment.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice will be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan.

Document completed work and verify that the practice meets NRCS standards and specifications.

Fence checkout minimum documentation will include:

- Fence purpose.
- Type of fence.
- Post type, length, diameter, and depth set in ground.
- Brace location, length, size, kind, and height.
- Spacing between line posts and braces.
- Height of top wire above ground.
- Length of fence and method used to determine length.
- Plan map with fence location.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Regular inspection of fences should be part of an on-going management program. Inspection of fences after storm events is needed to facilitate the function of the intended use of the fence.

Clear brush and other vegetation from fence lines. Trim or remove overhanging trees and limbs as needed.

Remove and properly discard all broken fencing material and hardware. All necessary precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of construction and maintenance crews.

REFERENCES

United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management and United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 1988. Fences. Missoula Technology and Development Center.

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2005. Electric fencing for serious graziers. Columbia, Mo.

http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/news/pubs_download/out/MO%20NRCS%20Electric%20Fencing_low.pdf

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2003. National range and pasture handbook, revision 1. Washington, DC.